



Riverfront Open Space Plan

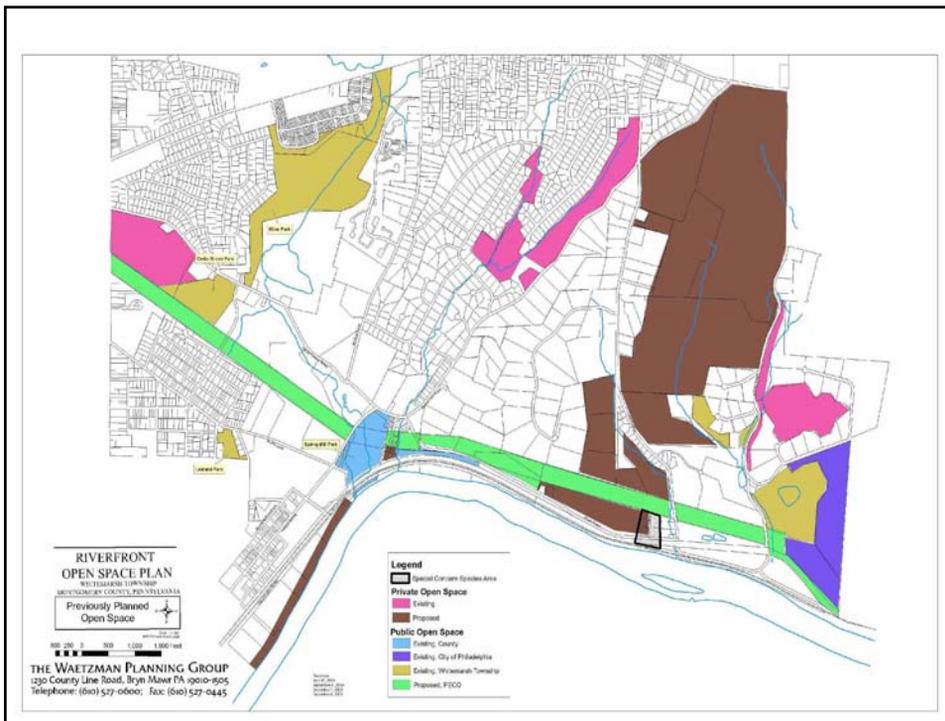
Open House May 25, 2010

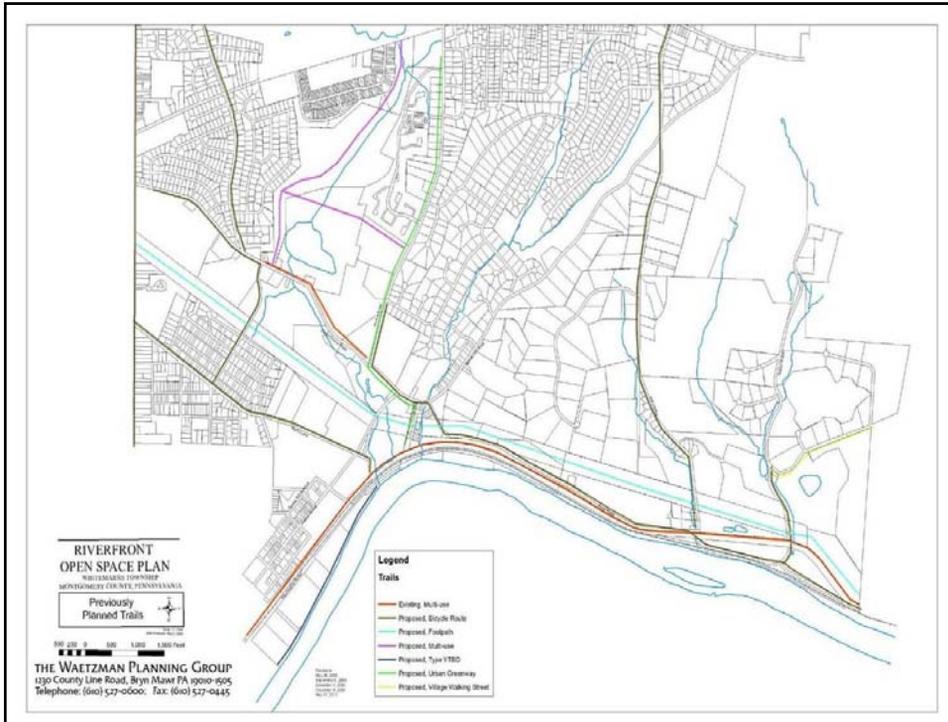


Riverfront Open Space Plan: Table of Contents

- Chapter 1 Introduction
- Chapter 2 Riverfront Tour Summary
- Chapter 3 Plan Summaries
- Chapter 4 Goals and Objectives
- Chapter 5 Summary of Stakeholder Meetings
- Chapter 6 Recommendations
- Chapter 7 Action Plan
- Appendices

3





Goals Established for the Plan

- **Goal #1:**
Develop opportunities and methods for increasing public access along the Schuylkill River.
- **Goal #2:**
Enhance and preserve the natural surroundings/environment of the Riverfront area through the use of sustainable practices and standards.
- **Goal #3:**
Coordinate the recommendations within this Riverfront Plan with those contained in other pertinent planning documents.
- **Goal #4:**
Continue to develop active recreational opportunities along the Riverfront area.
- **Goal #5:**
Encourage partnerships with those municipalities that share the Riverfront with Whitmarsh Township.



● ● ● Riverfront Tour



7



● ● ● Preliminary Recommendations

- Trail Related
 - Development of a multi-use trail along the entire riverfront within the Township
 - Develop more of a focal point/trailhead at Spring Mill (through joint efforts of the County, Twp., PECO and SEPTA).
 - Create a safe crossing of the R6 tracks from Washington Street to County Trail
 - Design riverfront trail for leisurely use
 - Address safety issues

8





Preliminary Recommendations

- Amenities
 - Construct a restroom facility
 - Install river-related art
 - Consider the desirability of a “water wall” as a focal point and noise reduction device
 - Provide overlooks of the river (off-trail)
 - Create civic gathering space
- Water Use
 - Boat launches are recommended in several locations
 - Provide water tours—self-guided and/or guided?
 - Establish fishing piers

9



Preliminary Recommendations

- Environmental Concern
 - Alert potential developers of environmental concerns
- Public Safety
 - Provide locations for water drafting
 - Provide security lighting
 - Provide ‘security posts’ with emergency phones; security cameras
 - Design for emergency vehicles
- Circulation
 - Extend Washington Street
 - Explore potential river crossing

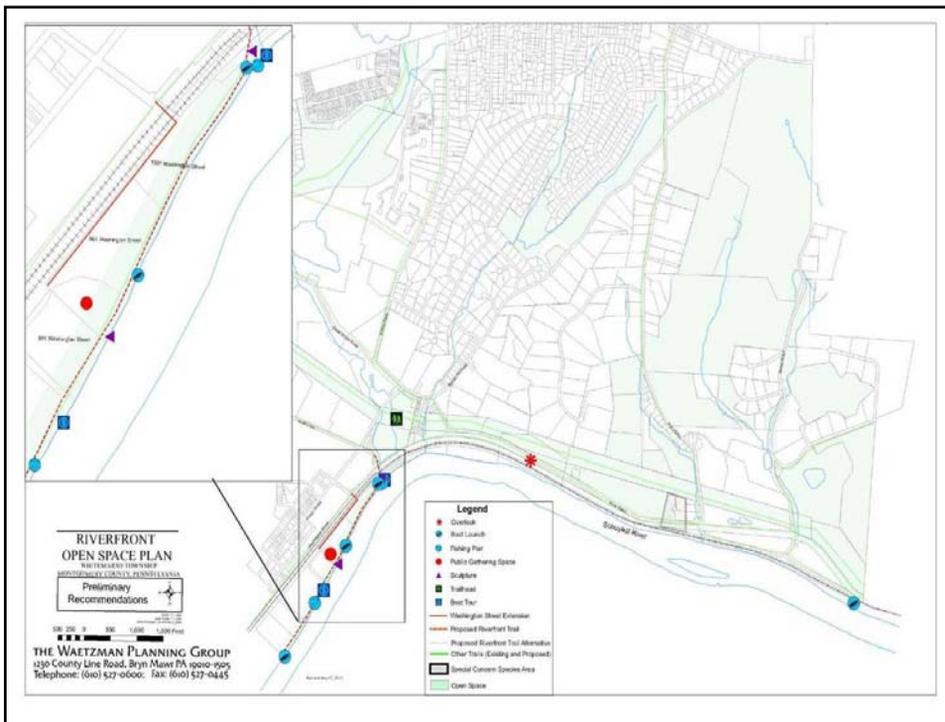
10



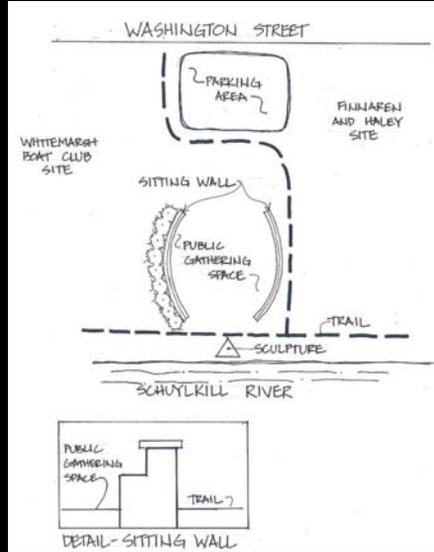
Preliminary Recommendations

- Signage
 - Provide a consistent way-finding sign system
 - Install interpretive stations/signage
- Landscaping
 - Create/restore riparian buffer landscaping
 - Restore habitat on 'East 33'
 - Provide beautification and landscape enhancements
- Service Uses
 - Provide additional public parking
 - Locate bike and/or boat rental facilities

11



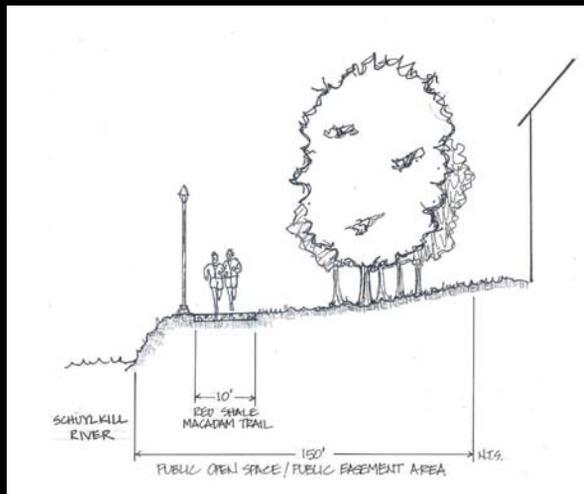
Public Gathering Space Conceptual Sketch



13



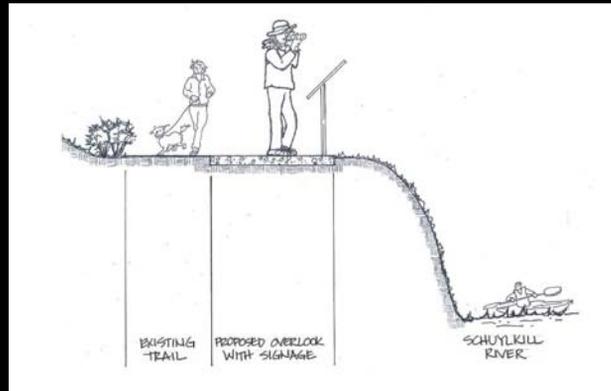
Riverfront Trail Cross Section



14



Overlook Conceptual Sketch

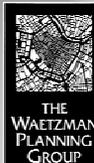


15



Thank You!

Please contact Bruce Horrocks,
Acting Township Manager, for further
information and comments.



Comments on proposed Riverfront Open Space Plan
From Open House held on May 22, 2010

Public:

George Young:

1. Control of motorboat use at boat launches. They will cause an expense and will be an on-going manpower challenge.
2. Environmental recommendations can be so expensive as to limit other improvements.
3. Drawing people to the area is a positive(?) and positive areas feed upon themselves and expand. The installation of water screens, visible from 76, will draw visitors. Sculptures can rotate and act as a draw.
4. River crossings are utilized by few.
5. Build on positives(?)

Christina Kobland:

1. I am opposed to spending any money, Township or grant monies, on any of the initiatives other than native restoration of the areas. We need more wildlife habitat and less access by people. These riverine areas serve a natural purpose, helping to minimize flooding and property damage. To add additional development, in any form, is a mistake in my opinion.
2. Landscaping must be limited to native vegetation. It needs to be built into the ordinance.

Steven Nelson Director of Policy, MONTCO.

1. Consider connecting Schuylkill River Trail to Walnut Street neighborhood (or nearby). This would be a ped/bike connection, not vehicular. This would create a connection to trail between Lime St and Cherry St.
2. County is very willing to consider partnerships with boat clubs to increase access to River.
3. County is very willing to consider partnership with private vendors for bike rental, small scale retail canoe/kayak rental on County land.

Karen and Joseph Ferrier (713 East Elm St)

1. Property is in the RDD. We made 713 E Elm our home in 1989 and have paid flood insurance ever since. Please make note that our home has never come close to being flooded. However, we have scant means to actually visit the river as it involves crossing private property. There is no public right-of-way.
2. Make note that the Dutch name Schuylkill means Hidden River, hence it is redundant to add the word "river" when speaking about the Schuylkill.
3. As per your request we wish to submit 5 high priority objectives, they are not all from your list. We have been at the river access issue at least for 10 years and can only hope our insight is considered.
 - a. Conduct a Township inventory in the former industrial riparian area to ascertain assets, both environmental and historic. There is a rare canal lock that exists behind Dan Lepore and Sons that should be preserved, about the 500 block of Washington St.

- b. Create and restore the riparian buffer.
 - c. Research and consider the restoration of the wetland and filled-in stream at 700 block of Washington St on the river. This is now the location of an underground 10 inch pipe, and we can do better. It appears this tributary has at one time accommodated swimmers before it was filled in. I will document what I can as regards this stream and its demise.
 - d. Create a fishing pier along the design of piers in lower Evansburg State Park, or any design.
 - e. Establish a public canoe/boat launch that can also be used by emergency services immediately, most likely at Spring Mill Creek outlet.
4. Thank you to allow our input regarding a longstanding injustice as the residents have been barred from the Schuylkill since about 1830.

Greg and Denise Nowack

1. Regarding Overlooks, There certainly is a different perspective of the infamous "Conshohocken Curve" as can be viewed from behind the Spring Mill Train Station! Attached two photos and offered more.

Sydelle Zove

1. Attached are two files with info on the parcel I mentioned during the Open House. This 11-acre piece of land offers dramatic vistas. There's an old house close to Barren Hill Road, and a 1950s residence built into the hillside overlooking the river.

The Township really should do something to protect this land from development. In 2008, I spoke with Gordon Geasland, the owner. As I mentioned, what I discovered when hiking along the PECO right-of-way is that he stores a number of old-fashioned house trailers/campers on his land. He told me that he restores them. There's also a bubbling spring that flows down the hillside, creating that wet area along River Road.

On one of the PECO parcels closest to the Geasland land, there is an unpaved road that affords access to the power lines. It is quite close to Spring Mill--just around the bend--and could be used by hikers to access an overlook. When the Ashford Farm land is factored into this whole equation, there is quite a bit of precious open space that cries out for attention. The steep slopes no doubt will limit development, but Whitemarsh should be proactive in addressing the long-term use of this area.

Hines Rowing Center

1. The HRC submitted comments on proposed future use of portions of their property and we will be meeting with Township staff later this month to discuss proposal. They indicated the possibility of incorporating a civic gathering space on their lands in addition to providing opportunity for bike and boat rental facilities.

Township:

EAB (Matt)

1. Plan looks good. If civic gathering space will be created, I think signage must include strong requests for environmental stewardship on the parts of citizens frequenting the facility – otherwise, there is a risk for additional trash/pollution to land/river.
2. Safety issues are the most important priorities, to me. I also think riparian buffer maintenance is a high priority.

Open Space

1. Presented a grid representing individual votes. The development of a multi-use trail was of high priority to the group as a whole, however some members felt it should be pedestrian based only (4).